

2516 Chestnut Woods Ct.  
Reisterstown, MD 21136

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Testimony: SB483 – Private Well Safety Act

Position: Favorable with amendment

Hearing Date: February 15, 2023

I am in favor of SB483 with an amendment to include testing for commonly used PFAS.

I've been a resident Baltimore county about 28 years; nearly 25 of those years have been in my Reisterstown home, which my husband and I had constructed for our then young family. Our home uses a well for water, as do all the nearby homes in this pastoral section of our county. Our well has not been tested since 1998, which was required before occupancy and was not tested for PFAS at that time.

A couple of months ago, I learned through friends in New Jersey of the extensive PFAS well contamination issues in New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. One Pennsylvania PFAS hot spot is in a town called Willow Grove, where my husband and I briefly resided. The source of this particular contamination is the Naval Air Station in Willow Grove.

Upon further investigation, I learned that Maryland also has several of these contamination hot spots around military installations. Imagine my surprise when I read that I lived about a mile from one such installation and hot spot, the Isadore Jachman Armory, which is primarily used for reservist training. In addition, the Armory is located next to the Chestnut Ridge fire station, which has practiced fire training using PFAS filled fire-fighting foam for many years.

While far less was known about PFAS 25 years ago, the EPA now says that they are unsafe at any detectable level. I am very concerned that while other nearby states are actively engaged in testing to understand environmental contamination, Maryland seems to be putting its head in the sand. The community of Willow Grove, PA is doing testing of the environment and testing study participants for PFAS in blood work to learn more about exposure and various diseases including cancer.

Marylanders should know if their wells are contaminated and learn what can be done to minimize our exposure to these harmful chemicals. While not everyone can afford a reverse osmosis system, we need state legislators to show leadership in testing our water and providing guidance on what we can do to protect ourselves, and our families.

We also need to follow Maine's example and learn more about all the products are sources of PFAS. I recently learned that despite industry assurances to the contrary, all synthetic turf fields contain PFAS in their tire crumb and plastic grass according to Dr. Graham Peaslee, a nuclear chemist and researcher from the University of Notre Dame and other EPA approved testing facilities. Further studies have shown that the PFAS in synthetic turf leach into our groundwater and are expected to persist for thousands of years. So they not only contaminate our children when they play on such fields, but they can also contaminate the larger community around these fields.

We need to do everything we can to better understand the extent of our own PFAS contamination, the sources, and how we can remedy this for our residents. This year is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Maryland Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), which asserted that every person has a fundamental and inalienable right to a healthful environment.

I urge you to recall MEPA and give a favorable review of SB 483 with an amendment to include the testing of PFAS.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marie LaPorte".

Marie LaPorte